

Virginia

Fisheries Coordinator

Represented by the following Members of Congress:

Senator John W. Warner (R)
Senator George F. Allen (R)
Rep. Robert C. Scott (D-3rd)

Contact

Albert Spells, Project Leader
Virginia Fisheries Coordinator
11110 Kimages Road
Charles City, VA 23030
Phone: 804/829 5627
Fax: 804/829 6067
TDD: 800/877 8339
E-mail: albert_spells@fws.gov

The Virginia Fisheries Coordinator is co-located with the Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery.

Purpose

The purpose of the Virginia Fisheries Coordinator is to work with partners to protect and restore declining and depleted nationally significant interjurisdictional fish, native finfish and shellfish and their habitats in Virginia, Maryland and along the Atlantic coast. Species of concern include American shad, river herring, Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon, Atlantic coast striped bass and American eel.

Management Activities

- Evaluates hatchery stocking programs to determine their effectiveness
- Provides presentations and tours in support of education and outreach
- Works with state, federal and private partners to restore important fisheries habitat, e.g., fish passage, dam removal, submerged aquatic vegetation
- Works with others on fish restoration projects, including for striped bass, American shad and Atlantic sturgeon

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

January 2006



Atlantic sturgeon

USFWS

Highlights

Acquired \$228,000 of Cooperative Conservation Initiative funds for three partners for habitat restoration: 1) Shenandoah Valley pure water forum (\$75,000) and Harrisonburg Dam removal (completed); 2) Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (\$53,418) and submerged aquatic vegetation restoration in the Potomac and James rivers (ongoing); 3) James River Association (\$100,000) and Ducking Stool Point habitat protection/restoration (ongoing). Projects leveraged \$448,000 in non-federal matching funds.

The station partnered with state, other federal agencies and non-government organizations in a project that resulted in breaching Embrey Dam in Fredericksburg and opening 83 miles of main stem American shad spawning and nursery habitat that had been inaccessible for over 100 years.

Fishways on the James and Potomac rivers allow returning American shad to reach historic spawning grounds that had been inaccessible for 50 and 200 years, respectively.

Issues

Hatchery-released American shad make up more than 60 percent of juveniles and 40 to 70 percent of adults in the James River, while few shad have been observed in the Rappahannock River in Fredericksburg. This indicates that the restoration programs are very important in restoring the stocks of these two rivers.

Little current data exists on habitat and stock size of Atlantic sturgeon. This species may currently only spawn in Virginia Rivers in Chesapeake Bay.

Many miles of Virginia's rivers and streams are currently obstructed by dams, culverts and pipelines, blocking the migration of interjurisdictional as well as native species.

